

ICHLA Conference Task Force Meeting Minutes 6-05-06
IGC-South Conference Room 22, 10:00am

Community Attendees:

Ruthie Reyes- Job Corps
Michelle Gutierrez- Attorney
Candice Washington- Pacers Sports Entertainment
Claudia Samulowitz- The Language Connection
Morella Dominguez- Indiana Minority Health Coalition
Angela Iza- Lewis & Kappes
Sean Keefer- Bose Treacy/ISLHA
Joy Melnyk- Bose Treacy/ISLHA
Carmen DeRusha- Purdue Extension
Esther Barber- Mexican Civic Association
Ernesto Herrera- Attorney General's Office
Tia Nielsen
James Garrett- Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males
Maria Thompson- Institute for Latino Studies
Sister Norma Rocklage- Marian College
Mary Jane Gonzalez- Captura, Inc./Indiana State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

ICHLA Attendees:

Manuel Gonzalez, Commission Chair
Amy Mendoza, Commission Executive Director
Ryan Marques, Commission Staff
Laura Barrett, Commission Staff

Chair Gonzalez thanked everyone for attending the ICHLA Conference Task Force meeting and asked for brief introduction. He mentioned that the 2005 Conference had a budget of approximately \$65,000. He asked, "If we were to repeat this again, what could we do differently to attract people from across the state?"

Members from the newly formed group called ISLHA (Indiana Statewide Latino/Hispanic Association) described their organization as a lobbying group.

Director Mendoza gave a brief history of the Statewide Conference. She explained that the conference began over four years ago and was previously organized by Purdue Extension.

Chair Gonzalez discussed the importance of organizing a conference that would be worthwhile for a group of people who would be traveling long distances to attend. He mentioned that domestic violence is a huge issue involving Hispanics/Latinos. Chair Gonzalez would like to see social service workshops available at the conference.

Claudia Samulowitz commented on how domestic violence is a key aspect of the Hispanic people, as domestic violence is more acceptable in their country. She also added that leaving

small children at home is illegal here in the U.S, whereas, it very acceptable in places such as Mexico. Claudia Samulowitz also suggested that the conference include viable information about driving under the influence and awareness of cultural differences.

Carmen DeRusha announced a one-day Health Conference (Clarian Health partners) to be held at the Radisson Hotel in Indianapolis on September 7, 2006.

Chair Gonzalez suggested targeting two main types of social service: Organizations developing plans and community members looking to become involved in these services. He asked the committee members for their input on other areas of focus.

Esther Barber explained how Hispanics/Latinos should be educated on drinking and driving awareness in regards to the relationship with minors. She also discussed the issue with under age marriages. She explained that marriages at ages 15 or under are acceptable in Mexico with the consent of the parents. Whereas, the U.S. does not allow/accept a marriage if a minor is under the age 16. The concern is that many Hispanic/Latinos involved are being classified as sexual offenders. She felt that this has become a huge cultural issue and should be addressed.

Chair Gonzalez reiterated the need for cultural integration and education on Indiana laws. He mentioned the education research completed by ICHLA staff member Ryan Marques. This data includes educational research from the Indiana's state universities and the Commission for Higher Education. Chair Gonzalez would like to use this research to better attract educators.

Ruthie Reyes from Job Corps announced the free services that their organization provides to the public: diplomas, GEDs, driver's license training, clothing, food, personal needs, \$1,200 stipend upon graduation and free job interview assistance. She is also a Job Corps success story and works at the downtown Indianapolis (non-residential) location. Ruthie Reyes is concerned with the number of Indiana Hispanics/Latinos who have recently dropped out of school at the 9th grade level. She explained that Job Corps does not have enough Hispanics/Latinos involved in their program. Job Corps's target age group is students from ages 16-24. This organization has a grant that provides each enrolled student with \$19,000/year.

Chair Gonzalez asked Ruthie Reyes if she would be interested in presenting a Job Corps workshop at the conference. He asked the Conference Task Force to follow-up with this idea.

Sr. Norma Rocklage from Marian College informed the committee about a 2006 Hispanic Summit scheduled for September 15, 2006. The Summit's focus will include "recruiting and retention of Hispanic students." She mentioned how Calumet College in NW Indiana has been very successful in retaining students.

Tia Nielsen requested the presence of school guidance counselors at the conference. She is personally in contact with a network of educators and will assist in recruiting guidance counselor participation. Tia Nielsen explained how guidance counselors have the obligation and preparation to help students prepare for a higher education, as guidance counselors must

empower their students. She suggested that the Conference Task Force Committee “go to who is looking.” The conference must show the power of positive and negative issues.

Chair Gonzalez asked for discussion on the economic development portion of the conference. He asked Mary Jane Gonzalez to comment on this sector.

Mary Jane Gonzalez suggested holding seminars at the 2006 conference which might include a few of the following: financial resources, business loans, home ownership, insurance. She would like to partner with the Commission and include these services as a workshop. She asked if the target would be the community at large.

Esther Barber commented on the lack of awareness from the Hispanic/Latino community. She discussed the issue of claiming/paying taxes.

Sean Keefer from ISLHA asked if Juana Watson’s summit will collaborate with the conference.

Carmen DeRusha proposed, “The purpose of the conference is to bring people together that have something in common in an attempt to propel the Latino people and make an impact.” She reiterated the importance of sharing, learning and networking at the conference. Carmen DeRusha said, “A summit must focus on many aspects at the same time each year and must be expected.”

Chair Gonzalez requested comments on Hispanic/Latino health issues.

Morella Dominguez from the Indiana Minority Health Coalition asked about the target audience. She discussed the main issues in Hispanic/Latino health care: mental health, aculturalization, alcohol, obesity and child healthcare interpreters.

Chair Gonzalez commented on Eli Lilly and their insulin project. He suggested the Indiana Minority Health Coalition could plug into this opportunity.

Tia Nielsen recommended that this conference reach both professionals and the everyday working class, some of whom might work 2-3 jobs. She suggested holding a two-day conference on Friday and Saturday in order to increase the attendance of the working class individuals.

Carmen DeRusha emphasized that the Clarian Health Summit planned for September 7, 2006 should not be in competition with the conference. She asked that the Conference Task Force Committee hire professionals who are specialized in certain areas of conference-planning.

Joy Melnyk suggested that the conference be a two day event and asked if the conference would be kept at a grass roots level and if it would attract individuals who are experiencing certain issues.

Chair Gonzalez confirmed that the Commission does not have enough resources to plan this conference alone. He agreed that contracting out various conference planning would be most beneficial. The Commission currently does not have a conference timeframe. Chair

Gonzalez asked that the conference attract both the community and its providers, as it is especially important for the community to participate.

Mary Jane Gonzalez asked the Conference Task Force Committee to include input from across the state. She said, "The key to its success is to contract it out."

Chair Gonzalez assured everyone that the Commission plans to hire companies who will assist with the conference.

Director Mendoza explained that the Commission plans to be consistent in hosting the conference each year at a timeframe, as consistency is ideal.

Angela Iza from Lewis & Kappes offered to give a presentation on immigration 101, current legislation and the common misconceptions that follow. She would like to encourage individuals to react less on emotion and focus more on the importance of immigration reform.

Michelle Gutierrez said, "I like the idea of it (conference) being the state of the state Hispanic/Latino Affairs," as talking at people would not be beneficial. She also agreed that the conference should focus on grass roots.

Chair Gonzalez mentioned the many meetings that the Commission has had with state agencies, including a meeting with the Governor's office. The Governor's office asked the Commission for their insight on 2-3 things that the Legislature might need work on.

Mary Jane Gonzalez suggested that the Commission focus more on the community efforts that are at work in the State of Indiana rather than spending a lot of money on "big names" to attend the conference.

Director Mendoza promised to email everyone the Conference Task Force Committee meeting minutes. She also welcomed everyone's participation as a member of the Conference Steering Committee. She encouraged those interested to leave their contact information.

Chair Gonzalez thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the ICHLA Conference Task Force Committee meeting at approximately 11:20am.